(ii) State Governments have been asked to form a nodal department for coordination of activities related to Food Processing Industries;

(iii) A data base would be built in the Ministry on particulars relating to Food Processing Industries;

(iv) Sector-wise Working Groups would be set up on Food Processing Industries;

(v) Regional/State level meetings of concerned agencies will be held for finalisation of State-wise Action Plans.

(vi) S & T Advisory Council for the Ministry would be set up (this would coordinate closely with the Development Council).

(vii) Measures for improving capacity utilisation of existing fruit based plants would be initiated and linkages between these units and producers would be established;

(viii) All pending proposals in the food processing sector would be reviewed and cleared;

(ix) New proposals would be examined, processed and recommended as expeditiously as possible;

(x) Rationalisation of existing rules and procedures relating to imports, foreign collaboration etc. would be worked out.

(xi) Fiscal and taxation package for the industry would be finalised.

Telecast of programmes in M.P.

296. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Doordarshan Kendra, Bhopal has agreed to telecast atleast 50 programmes annually prepared by all the seven zonal cultural centres of the Ministry of Human Resource Development;

(b) if so, what are the cultural programmes that have been agreed to be telecast through the Indore Doordarshan Kendra; and

(c) whether education oriented programmes are also being considered to be telecast in the State of Madhya Pradesh; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) No, Sir, Doordarshan Kendra at Bhopal and Indore do not have programme production or playback facilities and transmitters at these Kendras relay programmes telecast from Delhi, including those of zonal cultural centres.

(c) The Educational Television programmes in Hindi telecast by Doordarshan Kendra, Delhi between 9.45 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. on school working days and the UGC programmes telecast from 12.45 p.m. to 1.45 p.m. and repeated from 4.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. the same day are already being carried by Bhopal and Indore transmitters.

Upgradation of AIR Coimbatore

297. SHRI K. V. THANGKABALU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to increase the power of AIR transmitter at Coimbatore;

(b) whether it is a fact that a powerful foreign station is operating on the same wave length of 999 KHZ; and

(c) if so, the remedial action proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The 100 KW MW transmitter located at Tiruchirapalli which was recently commissioned provides extended radio coverage to large areas of Coimbatore district. Besides, during the Seventh Plan (1985—90), a new radio station with 2x5 KW FM transmitter is proposed to be set up at Kodaikanal. This will provide Radio coverage to entire Coimbatore district.

Increase in the prices of essential commodities

298. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of essential commodities have considerably increased during the last three months in comparison to the last year's;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(c) whether Government have taken any steps to bring down the prices of essential commodities in the country, if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) to (c) The All-Commodities Wholesale Price Index (WPI) moved up by 1.5 per cent during the three months period ending 15-10-1988, while it had moved up by 1.9 per cent during three months period ,between 18-7-87 and 17-10-87) last year. Trend in the wholesale price indices of selected essential commodities exhibited a mixed trend. The wholesale Price Index of some commodities have gone up while some have come down and a few have remained steady.

The rise in the prices of some of the essential commodities during the period is due to shortfall in production on account of severe drought in 1987 and its after effect in 1988, lean season and disruption in supplies on acount of floods and heavy rains in some areas. The Government have taken a number of measures to contain rise in the prices of essential commodities. The main thrust of the Government Policy has been to increase production of various essential commodities particularly those which are in short supply. To augment the domestic supply the Government has allowed import of some of the items like pulses, edible oils and sugar etc. and regulation on export of the essential commodities. Other measures taken to bring down the prices of essential commodities include strengthening of the Public Distribution System (PDS), opening of more Fair Price Shops, increased allocation of essential commodities and monitoring of the prices and availability of the essential commodities From time to time the Chief Ministers and Lt. Governors have been urged to enforce strictly the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and similar other legislations against hoarders, black marketeers and anti-social elements. Distribution of selected essential commodities is also being effected through mobile vans in far flung hilly areas and remote areas.

Loss of cotton due to pests

299. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the estimated loss to the cotton growers of Andhra Pradesh following destruction of crops by pests during the last one year;

(b) the number of cotton growers who have committed suicide following